Understanding the Public P: Insights from an FDOV PPP in Kenya
Executive summary

This study is part of a research project by PPPLab on the role of the Public P in PPPs. This research aims to provide a better understanding of the Public P in terms of incentives, roles, challenges, and partnership practices to support more effective partnering with the public sector in PPPs.

The “Food security via vertical integration of a new Kenyan potato chain” PPP was launched in 2015 as part of the second FDOV call by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency to enhance food security in Kenya through the development of the Kenyan agribusiness sector. The PPP is part of a larger strategy of developing the potato industry in the country to alleviate Kenya’s dependency on maize as a staple food. However, agricultural yields of potato farming are low in Kenya, and the industry is not well developed. The PPP addresses these issues by engaging local multipliers, service centers, distributors, independent farmers, commercial villages, and large-scale farmers in a collaborative approach to improve income for smallholder farmers, and in particular for women.

The main public partners in the PPP are the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through its embassy; the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries; the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service; and the local county governments. The main motivation for partnering is the opportunity to combine the expertise of the public sector with the innovative capacity of the private sector to come up with new solutions for food security issues and develop the agribusiness sector in Kenya. In order to achieve this objective, the public partners all play their part. Besides a supplying role in providing funds for the partnership through the FDOV instrument, the Dutch public P plays a crucial role facilitating and convening the partnership, organizing meetings, and providing training opportunities for the Kenyan public P, which is in turn responsible for enabling and embedding the partnership and carrying out coordination and promotion activities.

In addition to opportunities, partnering with the public P also brings some challenges and risks to the fore. In this PPP, one of the most crucial of these is the lack of capacity on the side of KEPHIS, which leads to delays in the project. Also, the apparent difference in the interest and approach of the public with the private sector is a burden on the partnering process. Whereas the Kenyan public sector, and KEPHIS in particular, wants to minimize risk by adhering to strict certification protocols, the private sector wants to maximize profits by strengthening the business case. Finally, the legal and political context has proven to be challenging – in particular, the implementation of devolution and the upcoming elections in Kenya, which may prove to have ramifications for the continuity of standing political agreements, staff involvement, and policy priorities. To deal with these challenges and mitigate risks, the PPP has developed a number of practices focusing on capacity development, agility in navigating the political context, and collaborative policy design.

The main findings of this study are that, in order to work effectively with the Public P in a PPP, it is important to employ a repertoire of strategies for engagement, to be able to navigate the local political context, and to be willing to invest in the development of partnering capacities and trust within the PPP. Most importantly, effective partnering in PPPs requires making strategic choices on the why, how, and what of working together with the Public P.
Colophon

PPPLab Food & Water is a four-year action research and joint learning initiative (2014 - 2018) to explore the relevance, effectiveness, and quality of Dutch supported public-private partnerships (PPPs). PPPLab is commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is driven and implemented by a consortium of the Partnerships Resource Centre, Aqua for All, the Centre for Development Innovation at Wageningen UR and the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV).

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Siri Lijfering, 6 March 2017

Food security via vertical integration of a new Kenyan potato chain
## Contents

4 Introduction
   - Basic facts about the PPP
   - Case introduction
   - Partners within the PPP

Analysis 7

Motivations of the Public P to engage in the PPP 8
   - Improve policy design and implementation
   - Leverage resources for development
   - Enhance service provision
   - Strengthening capacity
   - Strengthen political mandate

Understanding roles and contributions 10
   - Supply and scale
   - Embed and enable
   - Facilitate and convene
   - Promote and coordinate

Challenges and risks 12
   - Public accountability
   - Capacities to partner
   - Political and legal context

Partnership practices 14
   - Developing partnering capacity
   - Navigating political relations
   - Collaborative policy design

Main findings of the case study 15
   - Final note
Introduction

The case study presented here is part of a research project by PPPLab on the role of the Public P in PPPs. PPPLab is a four-year action research and joint learning initiative aimed at exploring the relevance, effectiveness and quality of Dutch supported public–private Partnerships (PPPs). For more detailed information on this research project and PPPLab’s knowledge agenda, please refer to the insight booklet: Partnering with the Public P and the PPPLab website.

Basic facts about the PPP

**Title:** Food security by vertical integration in a new Kenyan potato chain  
**PPP Facility:** Facility for Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Food Security (FDOV)  
**Project period:** 2015–2021 (7 years)  
**Budget:** €13,083,345 of which €3 million is from FDOV  
**Location of implementation:** Kenya, all counties  
**Partners:** Agrico Holding BV (lead partner); Agrico East Africa; Migotyo Plantation Ltd.; IFDC; SNV; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries; Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service.

Case introduction

In January 2015, the “Food security via vertical integration of a new Kenyan potato chain” PPP was launched in Kenya as part of the second FDOV call by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency. The PPP addresses the food security challenges in Kenya by producing 143,000 tons of top-quality Kenyan consumer potato in order to improve incomes for 12,250 smallholder farmers, of whom 60% are women.

In Kenya there is a high dependency on maize as the staple food and national crop. Declining yields due to disease mean that this dependency threatens the food security situation of the country. This threat has been acknowledged by the Kenyan authorities, which have decided to choose potato as a substitute for the current dependency on maize. In Kenya, potatoes are generally produced by smallholder farmers, who often use potatoes rejected by the market as seed potatoes. Because of this and poor agricultural practices in general, agricultural yields are very low. In addition, due to the lack of alternatives and storage facilities, individual smallholders have little bargaining power and must sell their potatoes to middlemen for very low prices.

The PPP intends to address these challenges by vertically integrating the Kenyan potato chain. This is an approach in which the PPP operates at different stages of the value chain in order to improve its efficiency and output. In this regard, the PPP engages local multipliers, local service centers, distributors, independent smallholder farmers, commercial villages, and large scale farmers in a collaborative approach. The potato chain has two growing seasons per year and the PPP revolves around a new two-cycle potato multiplication process based on seed potatoes imported from the Netherlands. As a result, follow-up private investments are expected to occur, which will in turn lead to further development of the potato chain (see Figure 1 for a graphical explanation).

Figure 1. Graphic by Agrico showing the Kenyan potato chain
The activities of the partnership include: 1) testing new potato varieties in Kenya, 2) developing two service centers to sort, store, and handle seed potatoes, 3) developing the capacity of smallholder farmers, 4) organizing farmers into cooperatives and commercial markets, 5) developing the capacity of KEPHIS to handle certification, and 6) improving tax conditions to ensure a level playing field.

**Partners in the PPP**

There are 7 project partners in the PPP, each of which has its own contribution.¹

- Migotiyo Plantation Ltd., a Kenyan company responsible for multiplying the Dutch input material in Kenya.
- Agrico East Africa, a Kenyan company and a subsidiary of Agrico holding, sells input material to farmers.
- IFDC, an international NGO, provides support through knowledge transfer and network provision.
- SNV, a Dutch NGO, improves the situation of smallholders by building capacity and transferring knowledge.
- The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs supports the activities of the PPP through lobbying and local support from the Dutch embassy.
- The Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries strives for a potato-enabling environment in Kenya in terms of certification and testing, improving rural infrastructure, and potato awareness.
- Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS), a parastatal of the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries, responsible for certification and testing.

The Public P in this study refers to the public sector, which consists of organizations owned and operated by the government, which exist to provide services for citizens.² As Figure 2 shows, there are three main public partners: (1) the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), through its embassy and RVO, (2) the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries (MoALF), and (3) the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS). In addition, several county governments are involved in the implementation of the project.

Figure 2 provides a schematic overview of the PPP’s partners by sector.

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¹ After the initial phase of the project, the partnerships with KENDAT and Farmconcern International – responsible for improving the situation of smallholders through building capacity and knowledge – were terminated, and IFDC and SNV were added as formal partners. ² Please refer to the PPPLab insight booklet ‘Partnering with the Public P’ for a more elaborate explanation.
The analysis in this study provides insight into the PPP from the perspective of the Public P in Kenya. The following chapters present an analysis of the incentives, contributions and roles, challenges and risks, and partnership practices from a public actor perspective (see Figure 3).

The insights from the case study inform a better understanding of the Public P, which can support a more effective way of partnering with the public sector for other partnerships. In addition, it may also promote reflection on the added value and role of Public P.
Motivations for the Public P to engage in the PPP

The main reason for organizations to partner in a PPP is the realization that individual organizations cannot effectively and efficiently address development challenges – such as the provision of clean drinking water, sanitation, food security – on their own. For the public sector, the overall motivation for partnering is to maximize and sustain development impact. However, besides these overarching motives, each public actor has its own additional motives and incentives to partner in a PPP. These motives are described in the following for the public sector in Kenya.

Improve policy design and implementation

One key motivation for public actors to engage in the PPP is to enhance food security in Kenya though the development of the Kenyan agribusiness sector. Kenya has faced severe food insecurity problems over the past decade. In 2012, the country experienced a major maize crisis; in some cases, as much as two thirds of maize production was contaminated by a new virus, rendering it unusable, leading to a major food shortage in the country. In order to avert another food crisis and to ensure that the population has access to food of the appropriate quantity and quality, the Kenyan government, through MoALF, decided to open up its market to Dutch businesses so as to diversify its crops and introduce a new staple food in Kenya: the potato.

For the Dutch Embassy, partnering with Agrico and the local Kenyan private sector provides an opportunity to combine the expertise of the public sector with the innovative capacity of the private sector to come up with novel solutions to work on food security issues that might prove beneficial in other agricultural contexts. Another major motivation to participate in the PPP for the local public actors is the prospective of local business development, and consequently job creation along the chain. Both MoALF and KEPHIS have explicated this incentive. The county governments also recognize that increasing the production of potatoes could have a large spillover effect for the county in terms of local business development, value addition along the chain, the building of storage facilities, transport, and infrastructure development.

‘In agriculture you cannot succeed on your own, you need partnerships, because it is a chain.’ - Kiambu county government

Leverage resources for development

Potatoes in Kenya are still mainly farmed by smallholder farmers, who use low quality seed potatoes and supplies. MoALF thus recognized that outside help to increase potato production was needed. By inviting Dutch companies to provide seed potatoes and to be responsible for the multiplication efforts, MoALF was able to acquire the necessary investment for its crop diversification strategy while sharing the financial risk of crop failure with the private sector. The diversification instigated by the PPP was also expected to lessen the pressure on central government funds, as they could be freed from the need to cover national food crises. The county also saw an opportunity in working with the private sector, as the high quality seed potatoes provided to their farmers would increase agricultural production and thereby decrease the dependency on county government funds.

MoFA actively seeks a combination of resources and stakeholder engagement for international development by stimulating cooperation between different private actors. The Seed Development in Kenya program³, managed by the Centre of Development Innovation (CDI) at the University of Wageningen, in partnership with MoFA, plays a crucial role in this.

Enhance service provision

The PPP also presents the opportunity to scale the effort to multiple counties in Kenya in an efficient way. According to MoALF, by working with international companies, the project could be carried out on a large scale in a relatively short time frame. The streamlining by MoFA, the Dutch Embassy, and the Kenyan government of

³ For more information on the Seed potato development in Kenya programme please refer to the website of Wageningen University https://www.wur.nl/en/show/Seed-Potato-Development-in-Kenya.htm
the agreements concerning the Dutch private sector’s involvement ensured that the private sector’s activities in regards to the importation and multiplication of seed potatoes, the development of capacity, and the facilitation of associated private and public service providers can be carried out efficiently and as such enhances the service provision of MoALF and the counties.

**Strengthening capacity**

One key motivation for MoALF and KEPHIS was the opportunity provided by the PPP to develop capacity and training initiatives. Within the PPP, the training of agricultural staff – usually one of the main responsibilities of MoALF – could be partially outsourced to the Dutch partners. The county government also recognized that the PPP could present a way of “uniting enemies in the chain”. By joining in this large-scale program and setting up knowledge exchange initiatives, such as a national potato council, value chain actors can learn from each other and set up cooperatives where needed.

‘The PPP could present a way of ‘uniting enemies in the chain.’’ - Kiambu county government

**Strengthen political mandate**

The final motive for the Kenyan public partners to partake in the PPP program, has a strong political dimension. Given the upcoming Kenyan elections in August 2017, the PPP can leverage the political credibility of the Jubilee Alliance. In addition to food security, business development and job creation are important development policy themes that may influence the population during the elections. Also, the success of the PPP is key to the political ambitions of MoFA. The PPP has been hailed as a prime example of the Dutch aid and trade agenda by the Dutch government. In this regard, Agrico won the Ambassadors prize in 2016, awarded to the company that exports most sustainably, or operates a company abroad in the most outstanding way.
Understanding roles and contributions

In order to identify the most relevant contribution of the Public P, it is important to map out the skills and assets of the respective public partners, and subsequently to link them to the roles that the Public P can play within the PPP. In the following analysis, the contributions of the various public actors within the PPP are clustered around four key roles: supply and scale, embed and enable, facilitate and convene, and promote and coordinate.

Supply and scale
A crucial part of the PPP is the funding provided by the Dutch MoFA as part of the FDOV PPP instrument. In total, the Dutch government has contributed €3 million to the PPP, which is about 25% of the investment by the lead partner, Agrico Holding, and its Kenyan partner Migotyo Plantations Ltd. In addition, in collaboration with MoALF, the Dutch MoFA, through the Dutch Embassy, provides training to KEPHIS on import requirements and the testing of seed materials. In this regard, the Embassy is particularly involved in providing opportunities for developing the capacity of KEPHIS by engaging the Netherlands Food and Drug Administration (NVWA) with its Kenyan counterpart. In terms of training, the county governments also played a part by providing and educating their extension workers in arranging trials with farmers of the new potato varieties. By coordination through MoALF, the program can negotiate on a national level and can be implemented simultaneously in multiple counties across the country. In addition, MoALF allowed the PPP to “take a shortcut” and “forego a few steps” in the risk assessment to expedite the process.

Embed and enable
Within the PPP, KEPHIS is responsible for testing and certifying the seed material, implementing the legislation, and setting standards on seed potato qualifications. As part of the board of the World Trade Organization's Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, KEPHIS is also responsible for developing the regulatory framework and standards of seed testing and certification. At the level of MoALF, overarching laws on PPPs are developed and are then implemented by the county governments. Since devolution in 2012, county governments can implement national policies at their own discretion, according to their priorities, and can design new policies to benefit their county.

Facilitate and convene
One of the most important contributions of the Dutch MoFA is its brokering or mediating role, both within the PPP and beyond. Within the PPP, the Embassy facilitates the relationship between lead partner Agrico and the public partners KEPHIS and MoALF. By organizing meetings, setting up consultations, and providing training opportunities to KEPHIS, the Embassy brings the partners together in a constructive way and bridges divergent interests and experiences. Beyond the PPP, MoFA convenes stakeholders through advocacy and stimulates the Kenyan government to create a level playing field for potato companies from the Netherlands. The support of the Dutch government also brings legitimacy to the PPP, as the representative of MoALF recognizes:

‘International companies are difficult for us to trust, because we do not know them or their motivation to do business here. Partnering with a company that is backed by the Dutch government feels much safer; it’s a form of quality assurance.’ - Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service

On a local level, the Kenyan public partners are most active in facilitating stakeholder engagement and the county government’s contribution in this respect is mostly to the community sensitization of the project. As the county government representative explains: “Due to many failed projects and unfulfilled promises in the past, farmers in Kenya have been wary about doing business with large international companies. By using the county [government] you can get much further then on your own. Depending on your relationship with the county, they can make or break your project.”
In terms of coordination and promotion of the PPP, several initiatives have been set up, both in Kenya and internationally. The national potato council, a multistakeholder initiative launched by the Kenyan government in 2010, is responsible for coordinating all activities related to the potato industry in Kenya. The aim of setting up the potato council was to create a platform for information management and capacity building for the various potato value chain actors and to mobilize and manage resources along the chain. In addition, the council provides an avenue for tabling cross-cutting issues within the potato industry, such as restrictions on the maximum weight of potato transportation bags (this example is described in Chapter 4). All public partners within the PPP – that is, KEPHIS, MoALF, and the Dutch MoFA, through its Embassy – are represented on the council.

Internationally, there has also been an effort to coordinate the involvement of Dutch companies in the Kenyan potato market by setting up the previously mentioned Seed Development in Kenya program. The Dutch MoFA uses this platform to manage general procedures and deal with regulations efficiently.

The annual Agribusiness fair in Eldoret is one of the promotional activities used by the PPP to enhance the business development of its chain solutions. The fair, supported by MoALF, presents innovations in the agribusiness sector in Kenya. In 2016, the Dutch government, through its Embassy set up a special ‘Holland pavilion’, where Dutch products and technology in the dairy, aquaculture, horticulture, and potato industry were showcased. The PPP was presented as part of the Seed Development Project, in which demo plots with different varieties of seed potatoes showed the growth of the potatoes and live harvesting. In addition to these local promotion activities, the Dutch government also promotes the partnership in the Netherlands by organizing various activities where PPPs can learn from each other.
Challenges and risks

Working with the Public P in a public–private partnership can present some significant advantages and opportunities. However, as PPPs operate in a complex environment, partnering with public authorities also brings some important challenges to the fore. Understanding this environment – and more specifically the factors that facilitate or hamper the engagement of the Public P – and formulating coping strategies for managing potential risks and challenges is therefore crucial. In the case study presented here, the challenges are clustered around three domains: public accountabilities, challenges related to the legal and political context, and challenges relating to the capacities to partner of the various public actors.

Public accountabilities

Opening up the market to international businesses involved a change in the way the Kenyan public actors engaged with the agricultural sector in Kenya. Whereas their traditional role had been to draft and impose rules and regulations, their engagement in PPPs meant a shift in the governance structure, so that negotiation and partnering moved to the heart of policy making. This new role presents some challenges to the Kenyan authorities, as MoALF indicates the balancing act of mediating between business interests and the farmers’ interest is challenging.

A related challenge is the risk management strategy within the PPP. To ensure that there cannot be a repeat of the maize crisis in Kenya and that public spending is accounted for, the certification rules and protocols are strictly followed and monitored by KEPHIS and MoALF. This presents a tension within the PPP because, whereas the Kenyan public partners are risk averse and want to safeguard the public’s interest, the cumbersome certification process runs the risk of harming the business case of the private sector and consequently burdening the partnering process. A case in point was the initial certification of the seed potatoes by KEPHIS, which led to a dispute between the partners over the results of the testing and the steps that followed. This tension has resulted in distrust on the side of the public authorities towards the lead partner Agrico. As KEPHIS puts it:

‘Although the PPP has great potential there seems to be a difference in motives, whereas the private sector wants to maximize profits, we want to minimize risks. I still believe in the potential of creating sustainable agribusiness in Kenya, so we need to rebuild that trust.’ - Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service

Capacities to partner

A key challenge within the PPP is the lack of capacity on the side of the Kenyan Public P. In particular, KEPHIS – as the main certifying body in Kenya – suffers from a lack of capacity and is not well-equipped to certify large numbers of crops. As the number of potato varieties and seed potatoes has quadrupled in 2015 alone (from 10 to around 40 different varieties of potatoes) there has been a delay in the certification of the project. MoALF has also expressed that it has been challenging to streamline seven Dutch farmer’s potatoes efforts and to broker the relation between KEPHIS and the private sector. Although there have been training sessions provided to MoALF, the high staff turnover within the Ministry meant that this did not have a lasting impact in regards to the development of the partnering capacity.

Although the county government did not experience the same level of movement within the department, it feel that the lack of financial resources, which they need to train farmers and to buy and redistribute seed potatoes, hampers their contribution to the PPP. As a representative from the county government stated:

‘We want to help, but we often do not even have sufficient resources to buy petrol for our cars to visit the farmers within our communities.’ - Kiambu county government
Legal and political context

One of the most crucial changes occurring in the business ecosystem in Kenya is the introduction of the devolution policy. In 2012, the Kenyan government decided to delegate a large part of its political power to local county governments. Since devolution, counties have been tasked with customizing the national policy strategies to their local county contexts. This resulted in a different set of policy priorities in different counties. Also, the framework of Public P partnering within PPPs is largely determined by the county government. This new institutional reality presents challenges to PPPs operating in Kenya. Whereas before, companies could negotiate on the level of the national government, now county governments need to be involved in the decision making process and agreements must be signed off on by local authorities before being implemented. Companies need to invest heavily into this process of negotiation with the different counties without a clear outcome, which is a challenge in terms of creating a sustainable business case. Although relations with the county governments are generally good within the PPP, the 'chain of command' and the bureaucratic process of partnering with the public P at various levels impedes the efficiency of the PPP.

Another challenge in partnering with the Public P is the election cycle. As mentioned, Kenyans will vote in August 2017, which could change the political and governance landscape with potential ramifications for the continuity of standing political agreements and policy priorities. Due to the election cycle, it also cannot be guaranteed that the same public managers will be involved and committed for the entirety of the PPP project, meaning a renegotiation of agreements and rebuilding of trust.

The final challenge is on the level of the Dutch MoFA. As described before, one of the core strengths of MoFA is its brokering and partnering role: connecting the different interests of the Dutch private sector with the public sector's interests and objectives, within the PPP this also involves some challenges. On one hand, MoFA promotes Dutch business development in Kenya, creating a level playing field so that Dutch seed companies can expand their market share in the Kenyan potato market; on the other hand, MoFA is stimulating the local market development and capacity building activities of Kenyan public actors though bilateral training activities. When these two objectives are not fully aligned, the Dutch Embassy is in the difficult position of trying to bridge the different interests by ensuring Dutch business and Kenyan public actors both fulfill their ambitions. The associated risk goes beyond the PPP, to the level of bilateral Dutch-Kenyan government relations, and needs to be mitigated both within and beyond the PPP.
Despite the general framework provided by FDOV, no PPP is the same, and the success of a PPP often depends on not only the formal criteria of the partnership but on the ingenuity of the partners and their ability to align their interests and strategies. This chapter describes a number of practices that show how the PPP has managed challenges and mitigated risks within the PPP, and how it has capitalized on opportunities.

**Developing partnering capacity**

One way in which the PPP deals with the challenges mentioned above is by investing in developing the capacity of the local Public P. MoFA invests heavily in the partnership by providing support for the training and capacity development activities of KEPHIS and MoALF. The training, which focuses on phytosanitary aspects, consisted of several tracks: import inspection training, the development of import instructions, monitoring missions, and training sessions on diagnostics. In addition, when a dispute arose regarding the outcome of a test on the first consignment of seed potatoes from lead partner Agrico, MoFA invited a team of Dutch bacteriologists from the NVWA to inspect the results and work together with KEPHIS on the rest of the testing. The gesture was received by KEPHIS with both praise and distrust, as it was glad to receive some help but felt that it was also a discredit to their work. MoFA decided to organize consultation sessions and mediated between the different partners. According to all partners, this contributed to the trust building within the partnership and, more than once, the brokering role of MoFA was crucial in terms of alignment in the partnership.

**Navigating political relations**

When it comes to the certification process in the PPP, the question is how to deal with important but sometimes restrictive protocols and regulations. The PPP has taken several approaches to deal with this issue, varying from local government engagement to engagement on a higher institutional level. Due to the influence of lead partner Agrico’s seasoned business leader, the Dutch Secretary of Economic Affairs paid a visit to the project and engaged MoALF in a discussion of the need to create a level playing field in the potato industry and the associated strategy for achieving this. This mission proved to be crucial in bringing high level actors around the table to discuss bilateral cooperation on enhancing food security in Kenya through vertical integration of a new Kenyan potato chain. In addition, the visit promoted a spin-off project in Tanzania that is intended to pave the way to the rest of East Africa as part of a ‘5 day potato mission’, in which Dutch and local entrepreneurs explore business opportunities in potato farming.

As a result of these practices, the certification process for the seed potatoes through MoALF was expedited. Moreover, these efforts gave MoFA in general, and the Dutch Embassy in Kenya in particular, legitimacy in the project and created trust among the Kenyan public actors that the Dutch Public P was fully engaged within the PPP.

**Collaborative policy design**

Whereas the PPP took a more top-down approach to influencing policy in the certification process, it engages with the Kenyan Public P on a different level in relation to other challenges. At the beginning of the project, the PPP was faced with a logistical challenge in the value chain. The potatoes that are transported throughout Kenya were being stopped at roadblocks and asked to pay tolls for the road. These fees depended on how many bags they were carrying. In other countries, bags of 25–50 kg are commonly used; in Kenya, the potatoes were transported in bags of over 100 kg so as to minimize tolls. The use of these large bags results in many potatoes being damaged or crushed. This issue was brought forward in one of the meetings of the potato council, and the public authorities in different counties decided to work together to design a new policy on this, establishing trade block between counties to enforce these new rules. Thus, by engaging the local public actors, the PPP managed to lobby effectively for a change in the rules and regulations, which not only benefited the project but had a beneficial effect beyond the PPP.
Main findings of the case study

This case study aimed to providing insight into the “Food security via vertical integration of a new Kenyan potato chain” PPP from the perspective of the public actor. A better understanding of the Public P in terms of its incentives, contributions and roles, challenges and risks, and partnership practices can support a more effective way of partnering with the public sector for other partnerships. In this final chapter, the main findings of this study are outlined.

Employing a repertoire of strategies for engagement

In order to work effectively with the Public P, it is important to employ different strategies for engagement, depending on the nature of the issue at hand. Hence, over the course of the last year, the PPP employed a repertoire of multiple-level strategic actor engagement. This helped to build trust among the partners and align diverse interest.

- When expediting a political process, as was the case in the certification protocol, high-level engagement and policy influencing can be an effective strategy.
- On the implementation side, local level, bottom-up engagement of the public sector is instrumental in giving the PPP local legitimacy, as trust in the local community is crucial.
- Finally, when changing laws and regulations – as in the case of the maximum weight of transportation bags – partnering requires multiple-level stakeholder engagement.

Navigating the local political context

Another important quality of effective partnering with the Public P in a PPP is the knack of operating in an ever-changing local political economy; this is especially the case in Kenya, where devolution and election cycles play a key role in the engagement of the public sector.

- Effectively partnering with the Public P in a PPP requires skilled leadership, strong local networks, and experience in the local business environment.
- Navigating the political landscape by engaging multiple public sector partners is crucial.

Developing partnering capacities and trust

As the level of engagement in a partnership is influenced by the institutional capacity of actors, it is important to create the right conditions for partnering by investing in the capacity development of the Public P.

- Providing training and learning opportunities is not only important to develop the partnering capacity of the public P, but also generates trust among partners and stimulates the alignment of interests.
- Engagement with the local Public P by involving the Dutch Public P enhances trust in the PPP by providing a form quality assurance and provides a license to operate for the PPP.

Most importantly, effective partnering in PPPs requires making strategic choices on the why, how, and what of working together with the Public P:

- Why: What is the reason for partnering with the public sector? What can the Public P contribute, and what is the added value of each partner?
- How: How do you engage different public partners? When do you employ a top-down or a bottom-up approach?
- What: On which activities do you engage partners and when do you not engage them?

Final note

This study is part of a research project by PPPLab on the role of the Public P in PPPs. For more information on this research project and PPPLab’s knowledge agenda, please refer to the insight booklet: Partnering with the Public P and the PPPLab website.